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763 Mwehombo, and elder of the school, a post he would certainly have lost had this come to the ears of the missionaries. Attitudes to the verdict are interesting. Sapapula assured me that [754] Mwehombo had killed many people by sorcery both sons and sisters' sons; Luanga did not see the contradiction which I pointed out to him of his saying both that Mwehombo was good and that he had practised sorcery; Gonçalve, Mwehombo's son, appeared sceptical of the verdict, as did Aspirante, Sapapula's sister's son who was married to a daughter of Mwehombo's half-brother, Wayangu.

764 The verdict did not prevent Mwehombo having an impressive funeral. He was buried according to his wishes in the traditional hammock placed in the circular grave, instead of the modern coffin placed in the modern oblong grave. As a caravan-leader he was buried by the track to Chicunda at the point where the path to Epalanga branched off. A low thatched [237] covering was erected over his grave with the horns of the beast killed at the funeral on it. In 1956 Gonçalve and Pedro Nendi, son of Mbati and therefore a cross-cousin of Mwehombo, replaced this by a concrete memorial in the form of a cross with the base inscribed in Portuguese 'Simon Mwehombo Native of Gumba Great Man died 13th January 1955.'

797 Thus Mwehombo had twice undergone conversion from pagan to Christian, once as he lay dying and once after death.

754 His posthumous conviction for sorcery affected neither the form of funeral, nor the continued residence of his kin in the village. His conviction for sorcery was a reflection of the social strains in which he had been involved, not the opening of another cycle

621 of conflict. The kinship cores are not segments opposing one

●571 another as in a lineage system; they possess no clearly defined boundaries[10] or continuing existence in time. Their existence is dependent on the persons around whom the cores have formed, and on their deaths they lack any integrating principles. Mwehombo dead, his kinsfolk mostly found no objection in continuing to live in the village where his rival now lived as undisputed traditional headman.

621 There is no word in Umbundu for these groupings. The

[10] For example I have included José in the Mwehombo-Mbati kinship core, on the basis of association, but he came to the village through a tie with Sapapula.

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even in non-religious matters has influence with the post, and can through this influence effect the arrest of diviners and baptized polygamists, or intervene on the side of somebody called before the post.

A catechist may be removed from his position by the mission for incompetence, or for moral failings, such as unchastity or rum-brewing on an extensive scale. He may also become involved in quarrels with his people, who may say that he is bad-tempered, while he will say that they are disobedient. Such a dispute will be referred to the mission where an attempt will be made to persuade the two parties to sink their differences. If this fails, the catechist may return to his old village, but may become a catechist elsewhere if the circumstances have not been such as to destroy the mission's confidence in him.

There are other ways in which the catechist represents his village. The post may impose certain responsibilities; thus the catechist may be told to record all live births in the village for the purposes of official statistics. The catechist will try and keep on good terms with the policemen who live at the post and visit the villages. The catechist of Epalanga gave a chicken to a visiting policeman and explained that this was a general practice in order that catechists visiting the post for the annual check on their papers should find a policeman who would be good to them. However, a catechist will object to attempts to associate him with the more unpopular activities of the post. Thus when a policeman came to the Epalanga catechist and asked him to help in recruiting labourers, the latter was rather angry. 'My work is to teach doctrine, not to seize people.' Similarly, when visiting a Protestant village once I asked where the government headman lived and was told in rather an irritated tone, 'No, we have nothing of the post here. We have only the school.'

The sense of responsibility which the catechist feels for his village is sometimes counterbalanced by his lack of effective power. Thus in the dry season of 1956 a bridge near Epalanga which was crossed by the track to Chicunda was broken down. Pedro Chiquete Santos thought that this might bring punishment on the villagers, and accordingly appealed for volunteers to repair it. He also asked Jeremias, the Protestant catechist of

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797 571 Simbwyikoka, to help. Jeremias turned up with three of his pupils; Pedro, however, had no response. Returning at night to Epalanga, he complained of the attitude of his people, not so much that they had not been ready to help but that they had spread the rumour that he was going to complain to the post. He insisted that he had not said that he would complain to the post; what he had said was that a white labour-recruiter who had had difficulty with the bridge would complain to the post. The attitudes expressed by the catechist are interesting; he feels a responsibility for the village, he has not a corresponding authority to get people to do something which is concerned with the village, but not with the school, but is indignant at the suggestion that he would be willing to denounce his fellow villagers to the post. Indeed, cases arose, which will be described in later chapters, in which a catechist and an elder of the school took an active part in opposing a domineering government headman.

One evening two Kimbundu men, from a different geographical and tribal area, arrived in Epalanga with an unusual story. They had been travelling in the company of a European employer who had suddenly gone off, leaving them without money. This was at a town on the main Luanda–Nova Lisboa road. They had then set out travelling through the villages relying on the hospitality of the catechists to get to the Missão Católica de Bimbe, where they hoped to obtain money to pay bus fares back home. I do not know why they took this way; perhaps as missionary effort to the immediate north of Umbundu country lacks intensity there were no helpful catechists linking the place where they were stranded to their home. What is interesting is that they could rely on the hospitality of the catechists, although they had no kin or tribal bond to appeal to. Here again the catechist appears as the representative of his village who has particular moral duties. Another example of this was when the catechist of Epalanga took part in a funeral as a funeral-friend, which he was, being a native of Ndjandju, the partner-chiefdom of Gumba. He said that he would not take a chicken, as was his right, since he was a catechist, that is, he had special obligations to be generous.

In general the position of the Protestant catechists and elders

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of the school seems considerably stronger than that of their Catholic counterparts. This impression is gained by visits to Protestant villages and to episodes like that just quoted, where the Protestant catechist had more success than the Catholic in recruiting volunteers for work on the bridge. The reasons for this lie in the organization of the Protestant Church, which owes its origin to Congregationalist missionaries, and in which the distribution of power differs from that in the Catholic Church. The white missionaries exercise only a supervisory role over the work of the Native Church which is responsible for pastoral activity in the villages. The African clergy of the Native Church are entirely dependent financially on their people.

Compared with Catholicism, Protestantism lays much less stress on the sacraments of baptism and communion and much more on Bible-reading and the religious knowledge of the individual. Hence the teaching role of the catechist is more strongly stressed among the Protestants. For example, the Protestant catechists teach girls as well as boys to read and write. His dependence on the clergy is reduced; indeed, owing to the lay participation in the Umbundu Native Church he exercises some control over them. Among the Ovimbundu, as elsewhere in the world, the 'pyramidal' form of Catholicism is absent in Protestantism in which the position of the clergy is weaker and that of the lay leaders strengthened.

The relative autonomy of the Umbundu Native Church *vis-à-vis* the white missionaries and the disintegration of the traditional system of authority have given judicial powers to its officials. Dr. Childs has written in a recent article:[1] 'In Angola . . . the breakdown of traditional authority has been so rapid that the social life of the villages is now very near to complete anarchy . . . the missions and churches have been compelled to take over. Church leaders—catechists, deacons, and pastors—have taken on judicial functions. Church meetings, both local and regional, have become courts and councils.' He goes on to describe the legalistic attitudes and casuistical morality which is associated with these developments, and suggests that the lack of opportunity for political activity

[1] G. M. Childs, *International Review of Missions*, April 1958.

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servant of mine explaining how the Mwekalia chose the chief said, giving me a comparison: 'The Bishop of Nova Lisboa thinks "This priest has sense" and so makes him the superior of a mission'.[6] The disintegration of the old political system, and the association of its representatives with the ritual values which are no longer very significant for the mass of Ovimbundu, has destroyed the old pyramid of authority and prestige. The people associate demands and punishment, for which they seem to receive very little in return, with the post. Many draw a distinction between the actual *chefe* and the government, which they regard as benevolent and ignorant of the behaviour of its representatives. Despite such expressions of loyalty as the singing of the Portuguese national anthem at village parties the 'government' is too distant and shadowy for the Ovimbundu to have much knowledge of it. Nor has the post tried effectively to build up new types of bureaucratic authority in the villages—the government headmen are not given sufficient backing or responsibility by the post to do more than execute its orders.

Hence, the establishment of new types of grouping and leadership at the local level has been the work of the missions, and it is through the missions that these new groupings are articulated on to the total Angolan social system. The missionaries, who provide this articulation between the 'civilized' society and the local organization of the natives, form the section of the 'civilized' population which most satisfies, in its relations with the people, the expectations of the Africans.

To use another term, it is within the Catholic and Protestant Churches that Ovimbundu most clearly identify themselves. Baptism identifies an individual by giving him a name, hence Christians object to non-baptized people identifying themselves in this way. To an individual baptism is significant since it is concerned with his destiny. By it also he identifies himself with the 'civilized' population and achieves a new status superior to that of the pagans. The newly-born child of Christian parents will be given a Christian name and also an Umbundu name from one already held by a dead kinsman.[7] A few villagers

[6] Actually responsibility for appointing superiors of missions largely belongs to the superior of the Nova Lisboa district of the Congregação do Espírito Santo.

[7] For Umbundu names, see Elizabeth Ennis, *African Studies* (Johannesburg) March 1945.

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catechist or missionary for support at the post. There is no tendency to confine government appointments to chiefdoms and headmanships to Catholics.[8] However, the Protestant catechists are, unlike the Catholic catechists, not exempt from taxes.[9]

The Ovimbundu no longer possess a coherent political system of their own. They cannot, owing to the nature of their relations with the post and their ignorance of the higher administration, regard the Government as being their representative; the only wide-range systems with which they can identify themselves are the missions. It is through them that the individual is promised eternal life, that the village receives a new type of identity and unity, and that the Ovimbundu as a people participate with the 'civilized' population in ritual communities cutting across the boundaries of culture and geography.

The objection may be made that it is only the Christians who could effectively be represented by the missions and that in Epalanga and Gumba generally baptized Christians formed a minority. It has, however, been previously noted how the school may give its name to a village of mixed population. The catechist will represent both Christians and pagans when he is concerned with the post or with the mission. Moreover, the percentage of pagans in Gumba is far higher than in the rest of Bimbe to which they are linked by the Umbundu language and culture, by administrative divisions, and by a wide range of personal contacts.

It may, then, be asserted, that the catechetical schools and the wider groupings which they build up are the social groups most significant for Umbundu integration on any scale wider than that of the household.

[8] In Gumba the chief and government headman were pagan. There are government-recognized Protestant chiefs elsewhere in Umbundu country.

[9] In some parts of Angola the Catholic catechists are not automatically granted exemption but have to have obtained certain other qualifications, e.g. a certain degree of literacy.

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story to explain the non-appearance of the others which satisfied the *chefe*.

The catechist was somewhat criticized for not having pushed on with the case, and thereby perhaps getting Guilherme landed in jail. Guilherme did move out of the village in February and settled near the outskirts of the Protestant village of Kalungwengwe. Kapapelo also set about moving out of Epalanga.

In the conflict which has just been described, there are three disputes, the question of the bridewealth which involved Luciano, Simbwyikoka, Guilherme, and the anthropologist, the quarrel between Paulo and Guilherme, and the subsequent uprising against Guilherme which takes its signal from Paulo's reference of the dispute to the priest.

The question of bridewealth repayment is subordinate to, indeed enclosed within, the main dispute. It does illustrate one point central to the problem of Umbundu social control, the absence of any court machinery. Jeremias and Luciano had tried to recover it by appealing to the priest; later Luciano and Simbwyikoka attempted to get it back by coming and demanding it, that is by self-help. Another extremely significant aspect of the social structure is revealed by this 'enclosed' case. Guilherme after a bitter dispute with Paulo which has ended in the arrest of Paulo and Bartolomeu borrows 200 escudos from them as a kinsman. This indicates that kinship ties can survive and function despite a quarrel which they do not check or prevent, a point which will be developed later in an examination of how kinship affects and is affected by a dispute.

The conflict cannot be viewed as simply a dispute between individuals, nor as a dispute between the holders of opposed roles. Guilherme was generally regarded as lacking 'sense' (*olondunge*), the quality, greatly admired by the Ovimbundu, of good judgement and decent social behaviour, and he confessed himself to be at fault. Yet he could not have acted in the way he did unless he had been a government headman, nor would the uprising against him have taken the form it did had he not held an office dependent on the post. There is, however, no necessary conflict between a government headman and the catechist or

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elder of the school in the sense that there is no sphere where their duties overlap and where they must compete.

The roles of government headmen and of officials of the school are complementary. It is through the chief and the government headman that the Ovimbundu pay their taxes and fines, are recruited as contract labourers and are called to road service, are arrested for crimes and misdemeanours and are entered on official records. It is through the catechists and elders of the school that the Ovimbundu find the expression of village unity by which at the same time they are linked to the whites and to the rest of the world on the religious level. The missions bring the Ovimbundu closer to the whites than does the administration, without the administration's predominant interest in making demands.[5]

While at the level of the total Angolan political system the administration is more powerful than the missions, the position of the catechist or elder of the school is stronger at the local level because the catechist and the elder represent the catechetical school which is the only social grouping existing on a village basis, whereas the government headman in fact represents no social group but is simply an executant of the orders of the *chefe*. Hence the catechist owing to this representative role and to his contact with the mission (which is much closer than that of the government headman) can lead the people and invoke the aid of the mission against abuses on the part of chiefs or government headmen. This would not be the case if the post gave firm backing to its local agents and turned a deaf ear to communications from the missions. Opposition to an overbearing government headman is then likely to be led by the leaders of the 'school', who can count on the backing of the mission, if they have a good case, to intervene for them at the post. The relative importance in a village of the catechist and elder of the school varies according to such factors as personality. The way in which the catechist was ignored when he tried to intervene in the dispute over the bridewealth shows that the catechist cannot claim authority in disputes as a matter of course.

[5] The missions impose fees and a yearly levy on their adherents which are small compared to the official taxes.

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The transformation of the dispute between Guilherme and Paulo into what amounted to both a trial of, and an uprising against, the government headman is not purely accidental but is a natural consequence of the principle latent in the social organization by which the 'school' leaders complement and can check the chief and government headman.

The case also indicates the limited nature of their roles. Both Paulo (by preventing Anna's marriage) and Guilherme (by getting Francisco sent to contract labour) can strike at the other through the lawful exercise of their authority; any real attack on the other's position involves an appeal to either mission or post, and hence brings about a trial of some sort. Guilherme finding that the quasi-trial before the priest went against him, tried to bring the case before the post, but realizing that this also was likely to go against him came to terms with his enemies. That is, any determined attempt to solve a dispute is likely to involve at least the threat of a reference to the post or the mission.

The power of the priest to intervene in the actions of the agents of the post is limited. Thus Antonio Pires did not intervene in the case of Francisco but advised him to get a letter from his employer. It is, however, notable that the missionaries are not simply appealed to by Catholics. Protestants like Jeremias and Luciano, and pagans like Kasosi and Sapapula, were ready to appeal to the priest although the initiative came from Paulo. That this is so is a convincing argument for the claim which has been made that the catechetical school represents the whole village, although it could also be claimed that it reflects rather an aspect of 'civilized'-native relations in the total Angolan system, clientship, as the typical form of relations between the two groups, with the missions being the patrons *par excellence* to whom all natives are at least potentially clients. The general well-being of all natives is the concern of the missions, who are therefore liable to be appealed to in such cases as this.

In particular cases where there is another patron to appeal to his aid will be sought. This patron-client situation will crop up again in the account of subsequent disputes. Its origin historically lies in the history of attitudes to employees and to

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servants in Portugal and Angola;[6] sociologically it reflects the lack of any system of bureaucratic administration at the local level and the isolation of the *chefes* from the people. The uncertainties of taking a case to the post are such that it is thought desirable to have some backing (such as the letter the catechist got from the mission) from a representative of the 'civilized' community and in the absence of any other 'civilized' person the mission becomes the patron of all natives, whatever their religious allegiance.

The importance of this case, then, is its illustration of what may happen in a conflict between a catechist or elder of the school and a government headman. The limited nature of their powers, and the fact that their roles are not competitive, make a conflict between them, so long as it is not extended to pull in other people, necessarily confined to indirect attacks. If either party wishes to bring down the other he must appeal to the post or to the mission. The government headman can pull people in by accusing them at the post of not paying taxes or creating a disturbance, or by recommending them for contract labour. His position is not so strong as his dependence on the post might suggest, since the intervention of the mission, at the request of the villagers, can bring him down.

Within this main 'political' dispute is the quarrel over bridewealth, which is illuminating both in indicating the absence of legal mechanisms at the village level, and in showing how kinship ties continue to function at the height of a bitter quarrel. Both these points will be noticed again in the accounts of later disputes.

3. *Kapapelo and Sapapula*

The next case involved Sapapula and Kapapelo and was again to end in an averted appeal to the *chefe de posto*. On the 21st of February Sapapula, Sahuke (see List II, p. 56), Wasuka, Luanga (21), and others went from Epalanga to the house of Justino, who had called them there to settle a dispute. Justino

[6] An inhabitant of Lisbon, wishing to emigrate to Canada, wooed the maid of a former official of the British Embassy. Discovering that this would get him nowhere, he transferred his affections to the maid of one of the staff of the American Embassy. The implications are interesting.

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do not know how Kafelo and Lusase came to hear of the case). In practice, their role was that of any other spectator in trying to bring about a settlement, although a chief has, as was noted, the right to a commission on any indemnification. The right of spectators to intervene is not based on any particular relationship to those involved nor on any reputation for wisdom. There is in fact no organized routine for determining who may and who must turn up and who may and who must speak. Spectators and speakers are simply members of the neighbourhood community, some related to Sapapula, some simply fellow-villagers, and it is natural that in present Umbundu society, lacking clearly-defined social groups, the crowd that assembles on such an occasion should look like a chance gathering. Its lack of recognized procedure, of accepted leadership, and of specific criteria of recruitment are all typical of the neighbourhood community among the contemporary Ovimbundu.

Despite the 'unorganized' character of this gathering, there exists evidently a set of generally accepted symbolic values, which are accepted by Christian and pagan, by young and old. Thus Nahoka claimed as evidence that she had not committed adultery her meal with Kapapelo's wife, and the latter in turn offered as evidence that adultery had been committed a statement that her husband had made a gift of soap to Nahoka. These actions provide presumptive evidence of innocence or guilt since an adulterer or adulteress may not eat under apparently mystical sanctions with the spouse of the person with whom he or she has committed adultery, and the giving of gifts by a man to a woman implies a sexual relationship. These actions were presumably recognized as convincing evidence in the days when there existed a formal court system, and continue to be recognized as such at the present day.

The nature of contemporary social relations, as being the end-product of a series of acts between individuals rather than as the content of jural norms defined by status, is also revealed in the dispute, particularly in the episode at Justino's. Sapapula does not complain that Kapapelo had not behaved as a villager should to his headman, but that he had not been grateful for having been given land. Kapapelo's complaint that Saviel, Sapapula's sister's son, had attempted to seduce his wife was,

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like his accusation that Sapapula had incited Jaime to kill him, an attempt to portray himself not as an ungrateful recipient of Sapapula's goodness but a much suffering victim of his malevolence.

Although the moot reflects the existing social structure and values there are occasional reminiscences of the former social system. Thus Ngombe seems to have been acting according to a traditional but non-effective pattern in giving a long, judicial, summing up, which had no practical effect. Again, when Sapapula accused Kapapelo of wishing to break up the village it is probable that he was thinking of the old villages socially defined by the agnatic tie and physically enclosed by a stockade rather than the physically and socially amorphous villages of the present day. Values such as these survive in the minds of individuals when the associated social forms have disintegrated. They are brought out on occasions analogous to those in which they were formerly used, but are not nowadays decisive in the way they would have been.

The quarrel between Kapapelo and Sapapula is different from the other cases, since the meeting held to discuss it is held without the presence of a 'civilized' person and it pivots about a question of adultery or rather attempted adultery, a subject which has hitherto appeared marginally as a subject for insults. The case is held without the presence of a 'civilized' person, and this is from necessity, not from choice. Sapapula had tried to have the case heard by Justino, and Kapapelo was eventually brought to terms by Sapapula's threat to refer the matter to the post. While the moot shows us the community acting to uphold social control, such action is regarded as an unsatisfactory substitute for a decision by somebody who could, as Gonçalve said of Antonio Pires, 'leave with the words', that is, settle the case.

Adultery has previously occurred as an accusation thrown in during a squabble that has begun with something else. Thus Guilherme accused Paulo and Wasuka accused Kapapelo of adultery because they were angry with them; they were not angry with them because they thought they had committed adultery with their wives. It is parallel to the suggestions that Kapapelo was a sorcerer, an insult not an accusation. It now

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than the catechists and 'elders of the school'; yet the weakness of the agents of the post before a local opposition led, not by such traditional figures as Kafelo and Sapapula, but by the school functionaries, has been demonstrated. The post accepts intervention by the mission in supporting disputants, and the mission is ready to help not only its disputants but any native who has a strong case—that is, it has a generalized relation of patronage to all natives.[13] Hence, since in a serious dispute people look round for a 'civilized' patron, the mission is the one most likely to be appealed to, and these appeals usually go through its local agents.

While the symbiosis of two societies, one ruling, the other ruled, is a common feature of modern Africa, the extremely limited nature of the role delegated by the administration to the native authority, the 'patron-client' tie linking 'civilized' persons to the natives, and the opportunity given to patrons to intervene in cases before the *chefe*, seem to be distinctive features of Portuguese colonization.[13]

The third aspect of the social structure mentioned in the introductory section was the role in disputes of kinship ties. It has been earlier noted that Sapapula's supporters regarded him as a victim of a concerted alliance by Guilherme, Kapapelo, Lusase, and Ndonga. In fact Lusase had avoided getting involved in the dispute between Guilherme and Paulo, had supported Sapapula against Kapapelo, and had disclaimed responsibility for Ndonga's act. The present social structure is not one in which groups of kin habitually co-operate;[14] and it is possible that this belief in a coalition against Sapapula reflects memories of the old social structure.

Kinship ties between individuals seem neither to restrain them from quarrelling nor to be liable to permanent disruption as a result of quarrels. By August 1956 Kasosi was once again

[13] It is felt in administrative circles that the advancement of the African is mainly the responsibility of the missions.

[13] Anybody who knows the Portuguese well will acknowledge the importance given to personal influence (*cunha*) and the lack of esteem for bureaucratic (in the Weberian sense) procedures.

[14] See Chapters IV and VII for details on the kinship cores and on general aspects of kinship. The support which Sapapula received was not confined to his own kinship core—thus Gregorio who enthusiastically supported Sapapula was not even a kinsman.